

CATHERINE'S EMBASSY TO FLORENCE

laity by the example of their own virtuous lives. And let him, without any delay, receive back the Florentines and their allies into the fold. Through the Divine Goodness, no great evil has

•esulted from the recent tumult. His children are pacified and asking him for mercy ; and, if they do not seem to be asking it in the way he would wish, let him grant it all the same, and they will prove more faithful than the others. " Alas, my babbo, I am fain to stay here no longer. Do with me afterwards what you will. Grant this grace and this mercy to me, miserable wretched woman, who am knocking at your door. My father, do not deny •ne the crumbs that I am asking for your children." ¹

Urban was no longer at Rome, but at Tivoli, alone with the other Italian cardinals : Corsini, Orsini, Brossano, and Tebaldeschi. Circumstances had made it imperative upon him to make peace with Florence on whatever terms could be obtained, and the ambassadors, especially Barbadori and Filippo Corsini, in spite of the treatment they had received, were doing their duty by the Republic. The new Signoria, no less than the Pope, was resolved to make peace without further delay, without haggling over the conditions.

In the meanwhile, a strange lull seemed to have fallen upon Florence. The priors, ardently pursuing their work of pacifying the city within and without, seem to have received no warning that anything was stirring beneath the surface. But the lowest strata of the populace, still expecting to be punished for what they had done in the recent tumults, were holding secret meetings, taking fearful oaths, preparing to rise against the burgher government; and those of the upper classes who had been admonished, not content with what they had achieved, were stirring them up. Not the slightest rumour of what was preparing had as yet reached the Signoria.²

¹ Letter 291 (15).

² Cf. Gino Capponi (the elder), *op. cit.*, pp. 251-255. In a passage, curiously suggestive of Catherine, he says : " Per lo peccato commesso contro a tanta Chiesa di Dio permise Iddio dare questa disciplina a questa nostra città, come appresso si dira."